United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1379
26 April 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of Yugoslav Conference, tells correspondents following five-day tour of region that peace plan "is not dead"; talks on Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to resume at Headquarters by mid-week; stronger sanctions against Yugoslav Federal Republic (Serbia and Montenegro) to take effect tonight, midnight.

- UNICEF Executive Director says children suffer "grotesque" abuse as instruments and victims of conflict, as UNICEF's Executive Board begins annual session at Headquarters.

- Cyprus offers to contribute one third of annual cost of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus.

- Oliver Tambo, National Chairman of ANC, who died Saturday, was "remarkable political leader", Secretary-General says in cable to Mr. Tambo's widow.

- Secretary-General, in speech delivered to House and Senate of Belgian Parliament, commends efforts by Belgium to promote diplomatic cooperation within Security Council, particularly among European States.

* * *

Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, told correspondents in Belgrade this morning that the Vance/Owen plan was "not dead". He made the comment before returning to Geneva after a five-day tour of the region.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

At a press briefing at Headquarters this afternoon, Fred Eckhard, spokesman for the Co-Chairmen, said Lord Owen had also travelled to Athens for a five-hour meeting with the Greek Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He announced that meetings concerning the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would resume at Headquarters by mid-week.

Mr. Eckhard also reminded correspondents that the latest sanctions imposed by the Security Council under resolution 820 (1993) last weekend would go into efect tonight, midnight, if the Bosnian Serbs do not sign the peace plan. Earlier today, the Bosnian Serb "Parliament" turned down unanimously the Vance/Owen initiative. However, the spokesman stressed that Lord Owen was encouraged that three Presidents - of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of Serbia and of Montenegro respectively, had publicly endorsed the Vance/Owen peace plan.

Also this morning, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met at Headquarters with Cyrus Vance, the other Co-Chairman of the Yugoslav Conference, for a "general review of matters", according to a United Nations spokesman.

In a related development, the Security Council's fact-finding mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina will delay its return to New York until tomorrow to permit a longer meeting with Franjo Tudjman, President of Croatia, in Zagreb this evening, according to Joe Sills, Spokesman for the Secretary-General. Earlier today, the mission held meetings with General Lars-Eric Wahlgren, Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and with Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs.

Yesterday, the mission visited Srebrenica. In a statement, Diego Arria, Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations and mission coordinator, called the town "a symbol of resistance" and demanded a Serb withdrawal from around the town.

After Srebrenica, the Council mission travelled to Split to meet with Mate Boban, leader of the Bosnian Croats.

On Saturday, the mission met with Alija Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo. It then travelled to Vitez and neighbouring villages. After visiting a house where a family had been massacred, Mr. Arria said such crimes were not ethnic cleansing, but "ethnic extermination". He added that those responsible could and should be stopped.

The Security Council decided last weekend, under resolution 819 (1993), to send the mission to ascertain firsthand the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is composed of Council members from France, Hungary, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Venezuela.

(more)

* * *

Children suffer grotesque abuse as instruments and victims of conflict, James Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), told UNICEF's Executive Board as it began its annual regular session at Headquarters today. However, he said that global development constantly created new opportunities for positive change.

During its two-week session, the Executive Board will consider such issues as the situation of children in Africa, "bridging" assistance to the former Soviet Union, and emergency operations in a new and dangerous environment. It will review programme recommendations for Africa, Latin America and the Carribbean, Asia and the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, and the newly independent States. This year, spending totaling $427 million from general resources and $682 million from supplementary funds has been recommended.

Last year, UNICEF spent $390 million from general resources and $354 million from supplementary funds. It cooperated in programmes in more than 130 countries, the majority in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

* * *

Cyprus has offered to contribute one third of the annual cost of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). In a letter addressed to the Secretariat, A.J. Jacovides, the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations, confirmed that his Government would contribute some $16 million annually on a continuing basis.

The Secretary-General, in a recent report to the Security Council, has proposed to finance UNFICYP through assessed contributions from United Nations Member States to overcome its current financial problems. The letter said the Cypriot offer would facilitate such a solution for UNFICYP's financial difficulties.

* * *

Oliver Tambo, National Chairman of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), who died Saturday, was recognized in Africa and around the world as a remarkable political leader, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Saturday in a cable to Mr. Tambo's widow, Adelaide Tambo.

Mr. Tambo not only championed the struggle against apartheid but also made a significant contribution towards the establishment of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa, the Secretary-General said. He took over the leadership of ANC at a critical period and rose to many challenges with courage and foresight and particularly during the many years of its exile. Mr. Tambo's passing away took place at a time when South Africa was going through a trying period, he said.

(more)

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a speech delivered to the House and the Senate of the Belgian Parliament on Thursday, 22 April, reviewed the contribution made by Belgium to the work of the United Nations, in particular during the past two years when the country was a member of the Security Council.

He commended Belgium's efforts to promote diplomatic cooperation within the Security Council, particularly among European States. Such cooperation was important because the mandate of many United Nations peace-keeping operations had changed and now extended far beyond the perspective of mere peace-keeping. Today, he said, United Nations missions might involve electoral assistance, humanitarian assistance and administrative management. In addition, the principal clashes were taking place not between States, but within them, as exemplified by the situation in Yugoslavia.

It was important that regional organizations have both the political will and the financial and military resources to promote the international security at their level, the Secretary-General said. In working for peace, the United Nations' effectiveness would be enhanced to the extend that the diplomacy underpinning the Organization was clearly defined and that States formulated unambiguous positions. "Peace-keeping troops, who risk their lives daily, must understand the strategy that lies behind their action", he said.

* *** *